

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (currently amended) A method for communicating from a printer to a remote support location, comprising:
 - receiving a first request for assistance from a user of ~~a-said~~ printer;
said first request having been triggered by said user's engaging ~~an external physical~~ button on said printer;
 - generating and transmitting a second request for assistance to ~~a-said~~ remote support location in response to said first request; and
 - providing an indication to said user that ~~a-said~~ second request has been transmitted; and
 - during the same communication session as the submission of said second request,
establishing an interactive communication between said user at said printer and
said remote support location.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 at least one step of which is conditioned on verifying authorization of said user.
3. (original) The method of claim 2 where said verification includes biometric authentication.
4. (previously presented) The method of claim 2 where said verification occurs at said printer.
5. (original) The method of claim 2 where said verification occurs at said remote location.
6. (previously presented) The method of claim 2 where:
said remote location includes a computer sending a print job to said printer;
said print job being suspended until said user is physically at said printer; and

said second request for assistance includes a verification that user is physically at said printer.

7. (canceled).

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 7-1 further comprising conditioning said interactive communication on authorization of said remote location.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 7-1 where said interactive communication is performed using VoIP.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 7-1 where said interactive communication includes allowing said remote location to interrogate said printer.

11. (original) The method of claim 10 where said interactive communication includes establishing a service call for said printer.

12. (previously amended) The method of claim 1 where:
said printer acts as a gateway to at least another device connected thereto; and
said second request includes information of said another device.

13. (original) The method of claim 12 where said information pertains to a print spooler feeding said printer from said another device.

14. (original) The method of claim 12 where said another device includes a consumer electronic device.

15. (previously amended) The method of claim 12 further comprising receiving said information of said another device in response to a user-initiated download request.

16. (original) The method of claim 12:

where said another device includes a computer driving said printer; and further comprising: receiving an updated driver for said computer, and transmitting said driver to said computer.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising: before at least said transmitting, attempting to locally resolve a problem at said printer; and transmitting said second request in response to a failure of local resolution.
18. (original) The method of claim 1 where said remote location includes a service establishment independent from an owner of said printer.
19. (original) The method of claim 1 implemented in a facsimile machine.
20. (original) The method of claim 1 implemented in a copier.
21. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 where said second request includes information pertaining to characteristics of a print job being processed.
22. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 where said second request includes information pertaining to a physical status of said printer.
23. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 where said second request includes identification information of said printer.
24. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising providing an indication of unavailability while said printer remains out of service.
25. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 where said second request includes audiovisual information captured from said user.

26. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of said printer and said remote location is protected by a firewall, and further comprising communicating between said printer and said remote location via a channel in said firewall.
27. (currently amended) A computer-readable medium for communicating from a printer to a remote support location, comprising computer logic instructions that, when executed:
 - receive a first request for assistance from a user of a-said printer;
 - said first request having been triggered by said user's engaging an external physical button on said printer;
 - generate and transmit a second request for assistance to a-said remote support location in response to said first request; and
 - provide an indication to said user that said second request has been transmitted; and
 - during the same communication session as the submission of said second request, establish an interactive communication between said user at said printer and said remote support location.
28. (original) The computer-readable medium of claim 27 further comprising logic instructions that when executed:
 - receive a response from said remote location; and
 - conduct an interactive communication between said user and said remote location.
29. (original) The computer-readable medium of claim 28 further comprising logic instructions for conditioning said interactive communication on authorization of said remote location.
30. (original) The computer-readable medium of claim 27 further comprising logic instructions for implementing VoIP communications.
31. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 27 where:

said printer acts as a gateway to at least another device connected thereto; and said second request includes information of said another device.

32. (currently amended) Apparatus for communicating from a printer to a remote support location, comprising:

means for receiving a first request for assistance from a user of ~~a~~said printer;
said first request having been triggered by said user's engaging ~~an external physical button~~ on said printer;
means for generating and transmitting a second request for assistance to ~~a~~said remote support location in response to said first request; and
means for providing an indication to said user that said second request has been transmitted; and
during the same communication session as the submission of the second request,
means for establishing an interactive communication between said user at said
printer and said remote location.

33. (currently amended) A printer capable of communicating with a remote support location, comprising:

a printer engine;
an external ~~physical~~ button configured to be engaged by a user of said printer making an affirmative request for an assistance;
request management circuitry for generating and transmitting an assistance request in response to said user's affirmative request; and
a network interface ~~for transmitting~~ configured to:
transmit said assistance request to ~~a~~said remote location capable of communicating with said printer; and
during the same communication session as the submission of said assistance request, establish an interactive communication between said user at said printer and said remote support location.

34. (original) The printer of claim 33 further comprising authentication circuitry for authorization of said user.
35. (original) The printer of claim 33 further comprising:
receiving a response from said remote location; and
conducting an interactive communication between said user and said remote location.
36. (original) The printer of claim 35 further comprising VoIP circuitry for performing said interactive communication.
37. (previously presented) The printer of claim 33 where:
said printer acts as a gateway to at least another device connected thereto; and
said second request includes information of said another device.
38. (currently amended) A method for receiving a communication from a printer at a remote support location, comprising:
receiving an affirmative request for an assistance from a user of a-said printer;
said request having been triggered by said user's engaging an-external physical button on said printer; and
during the same communication session as the submission of the request,
establishing an interactive communication between said user at said printer and
said remote support location over a communications network with said user at
said printer.
39. (original) The method of claim 38 further providing authorization of said remote location to said printer.
40. (original) The method of claim 38 where said interactive communication is performed using VoIP.

41. (original) The method of claim 38 where said interactive communication includes interrogation of said printer by said remote location.